

ARC-MILITARY (ANALYSIS) 2TAKES

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NEW YORK - DESPITE THE NEW STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TREATY, THE MILITARY MIGHT OF THE SOVIET UNION IS EXPECTED BY INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES AND WESTERN COUNTRIES TO PEAK BY THE MID-1980'S. BUT IT IS ALSO PRECISELY IN THAT PERIOD, THE INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATIONS BELIEVE, THAT MOSCOW'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS WILL BECOME CRITICAL.

SOME ANALYSTS BELIEVE THAT THE COMMUNIST SYSTEM IS INCAPABLE OF DEALING WITH THESE PROBLEMS AND THAT THEIR GROWTH COULD LEAD IN TIME TO DISINTEGRATION OF THE SOVIET UNION. OTHERS SUGGEST THAT THE MOSCOW MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO GO TO WAR WHEN ITS MILITARY ADVANTAGE HAS REACHED ITS MAXIMUM; AND BEFORE THE ERODING FACTORS IN SOVIET SOCIETY HAVE A SERIOUS IMPACT ON WAR-MAKING ABILITY.

IN THAT CASE, THE SOVIET LEADERS WOULD BE FOLLOWING THE CLASSIC PATTERN OF EMBARKING ON A FOREIGN ADVENTURE TO DIVERT THEIR PEOPLE FROM INTERNAL PROBLEMS.

THIS PORTRAIT OF SOVIET MILITARY POWER BASED ON AN INCREASINGLY SHAKY ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL BASE IS THE RESULT OF A SERIES OF INTERVIEWS WITH SENIOR INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS IN WASHINGTON, LONDON AND AT NATO MILITARY HEADQUARTERS IN BELGIUM.

WESTERN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES STRESS THE SHARP CONTRAST BETWEEN CONTINUED HIGH MILITARY SPENDING AND ACCUMULATION OF STRATEGIC AND CONVENTIONAL ARMS ON ONE HAND AND THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS ON THE OTHER.

THE PICTURE OF THE SOVIET MILITARY STRUCTURE LAID BEFORE THE DEFENSE MINISTERS OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION MADE THESE POINTS:

- SOVIET MILITARY PRODUCTION IS WELL AHEAD OF NATO'S: 3,500 TANKS ANNUALLY AGAINST 1,500; 3,400 MILITARY AIRCRAFT TO 2,000.
- MOSCOW IS ALSO AHEAD IN PRODUCTION OF INTERCONTINENTAL MISSILES, BALLISTIC-MISSILE SUBMARINES AND SUPERSONIC BOMBERS. THE UNITED STATES LEADS IN THE NUMBER OF WARHEADS, BUT EXPERTS ESTIMATE THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS TWICE AS MUCH "THROW-WEIGHT" CAPABILITY.
- THE SOVIET UNION IS REPLACING TWO TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS, CODE-NAMED SCALEBOARD AND SCUD BY NATO, WITH NEW MISSILES FOR USE IN EUROPE, OF WHICH THE SS-20 IS THE FORERUNNER.
- FOR A DECADE, THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT HAS DEVOTED 11 TO 13 PERCENT OF GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT TO THE MILITARY, WITH 70 PERCENT OF THAT

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TOTAL GOING TO RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING.

BEHIND THIS GLITTERING FACADE OF SHINY NEW WEAPONS IS A SOCIETY BESET BY INDUSTRIAL, SOCIAL AND NATIONALITY PROBLEMS; A SOCIETY COMMITTED TO THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL VALUES OF 1945 IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD.

THE CENTRAL ECONOMIC PROBLEM IS THE SLOWDOWN IN THE GROWTH OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION. THIS IS RELATED TO PROBLEMS IN THE SOVIET UNION.

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FNYT NEW YORK: SOVIET UNION.

THE SOVIET ECONOMY GREW AT AN ANNUAL RATE OF 6 PERCENT IN THE 1950'S. A DECADE LATER, THE FIGURE HAD FALLEN TO 5 PERCENT. BY THE MID- 1970'S, IT WAS DOWN TO 3.5 PERCENT. FOR THE 1980'S, THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY FORECASTS A GROWTH RATE OF 2.5 PERCENT.

INTELLIGENCE SOURCES NOTE THAT SOVIET MILITARY SPENDING IN THE LAST 12 YEARS HAS GROWN 4 PERCENT TO 5 PERCENT A YEAR. SOME PUT THE FIGURE AT 6 PERCENT TO 7 PERCENT.

THE SLOWING OF INDUSTRIAL GROWTH HAS AFFECTED OIL OUTPUT. THERE ARE AMPLE SUPPLIES OF OIL IN EASTERN SIBERIA, BUT SPECIALISTS IN THIS FIELD EXPECT A DROP IN PRODUCTION BETWEEN 1980 AND 1985.

THE EXPECTATION IS THAT THE SOVIET UNION WILL ENTER THE OIL MARKET AS A BUYER IN THAT PERIOD BUT THAT ITS PURCHASES WILL BE LIMITED BY AN UNWILLINGNESS TO PUSH FOREIGN SPENDING BEYOND 30 PERCENT OF EXPORT EARNINGS.

TWO KINDS OF POPULATION CHANGE WILL CONTINUE TO AFFECT THE SOVIET ECONOMY. THE FIRST AND MOST OBVIOUS IS A SHARP SLOWDOWN IN THE GROWTH OF THE SOVIET LABOR FORCE.

FROM 1970 TO 1975, THE WORKING-AGE POPULATION INCREASED BY JUST OVER 2 PERCENT ANNUALLY. SINCE 1975, THE INCREASE HAS BEEN ABOUT 1.5 PERCENT AND THE INTELLIGENCE FORECAST IS THAT FROM NOW UNTIL 1995 THE WORKING POPULATION WILL GROW AT A RATE OF ABOUT HALF A PERCENT ANNUALLY.

THE DECLINE IS ASCRIBED TO THE HUGE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN LOSSES IN WORLD WAR II AND THE DEATH TOLL IN STALIN'S PURGES. EASY ACCESS TO BIRTH CONTROL DEVICES AND TO ABORTION HAS KEPT FAMILIES SMALL.

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THE RESERVOIR OF PEASANTS AND WOMEN WHO REINFORCED THE WORK FORCE IN THE 1950'S HAS DRIED UP. INCENTIVE PLANS TO LURE WOMEN BACK TO THE FACTORIES HAVE NOT BEEN A SUCCESS. WITH SOVIET AGRICULTURE STAGGERING FROM CRISIS TO CRISIS, NO MORE PEASANTS CAN BE DRAWN AWAY.

A SECOND POPULATION CHANGE, THIS ONE DEALING WITH THE ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE, COULD HAVE A SEVERE EFFECT ON POLITICAL STABILITY AS WELL AS ECONOMIC OUTPUT.

TODAY, SLIGHTLY MORE THAN HALF OF THE TOTAL POPULATION IS RUSSIAN. BUT BIRTH RATES AMONG THE RUSSIANS ARE LOW WHILE THOSE IN THE EIGHT MOSLEM REPUBLICS AND AUTONOMOUS REGIONS TO THE SOUTH ARE RISING. BETWEEN 1980 AND 1985, EXPERTS PREDICT THE RUSSIAN POPULATION WILL FALL BY ABOUT TWO MILLION WHILE THAT OF THE MOSLEM AREAS WILL RISE BY NINE MILLION.

THE LANGUAGES, CUSTOMS AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THESE ISLAMIC REGIONS DIFER SHARPLY FROM THOSE OF THE RUSSIANS. THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT HAS MADE EFFORTS TO "RUSSIFY" THE UZBEKS, KAZAKHS, TURKOMANS AND OTHERS AND TO PROVIDE THEM WITH A LIMITED SHARE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THEIR REPUBLICS AND REGIONS.

BUT ACCORDING TO INTELLIGENCE SOURCES THE REAL POWER IS EXERCISED BY RUSSIAN FUNCTIONARIES SELECTED BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY OR RELEVANT MINISTRIES IN MOSCOW. AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL THREE- QUARTERS OF TODAY'S POLITEBURO ARE RUSSIANS, REPRESENTING HALF THE POPULATION, AND ONE QUARTER ARE NON-RUSSIANS, REPRESENTING THE OTHER HALF.

THIS CHANGE IN THE SOVIET UNION'S ETHNIC MAKE-UP IS EXPECTED TO HAVE TWO EFFECTS. THE TECHNICAL QUALITY OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORK FORCE WILL DECLINE BECAUSE WORKERS FROM THE MOSLEM AND FAR EASTERN REPUBLICS HAVE MUCH MORE LIMITED TECHNOLOGICAL BACKGROUNDS THAN THE RUSSIANS. THE ARMED FORCES, PARTICULARLY THE HIGHLY TECHNICAL BRANCHES, WILL SUFFER FROM THIS TECHNOLOGICAL BACKWARDNESS.

THE CONSENSUS AMONG INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS IS THAT UNREST IS INCREASING AMONG THE POPULATIONS BROUGHT UNDER RUSSIAN CONTROL, FIRST BY THE CZARS AND THEN BY THE COMMUNISTS.

MOSCOW IS DEEPLY ANXIOUS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE ISLAMIC REVIVAL IN IRAN AND ELSEWHERE UPON SOVIET MOSLEMS.

THE 40 MILLION PEOPLE OF THE UKRAINE RESENT EXCLUSION FROM MANY POSTS IN LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP.

THE THREE BALTIC REPUBLICS, LATVIA, LITHUANIA AND ESTONIA, HAVE BEEN THE SCENE OF INTERMITTENT RIOTS AND UNREST FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

ROMAN CATHOLIC LITHUANIA, BORDERING ON CATHOLIC POLAND, IS RESTIVE AND IS LIKELY TO BECOME MORE SO AS A RESULT OF POPE JOHN PAUL II'S RECENT VISIT.

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